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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 678
By Turner (Ham)

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Leon "Lee" Crawford Balch, retired Rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Chattanooga.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Leon "Lee" Crawford Balch; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Balch was an obedient servant of God who strove to be an agent of change as he tried to see humanity through the eyes of Christ, always working assiduously to improve the quality of life for humanity in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, for 22 years, Lee Balch served vigorously and faithfully as Rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Chattanooga, in which position he demonstrated the validity of his vocation and commitment to the work of the Creator in the world; and

WHEREAS, Leon Crawford Balch was born in Notasulga, Alabama in 1916 and earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Auburn University; following graduate work at Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he worked for Westinghouse Electric Corporation in Pittsburgh, Atlanta and Knoxville from 1937-1948; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Balch's employment with Westinghouse was interrupted by four years of service with the United States Navy during World War II as an engineering officer aboard the

battleships *USS Texas* and *USS Iowa*, serving with the rank of Lieutenant Commander; he later supervised Naval radar operations at Atlantic City, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, while in Atlantic City, Lee Balch met and married the former Laura Ruth Hindman, an Army Captain, who supervised surgical nursing at England General Hospital; after several years of marriage, during which he worked with Kingsport Electric Service in Kingsport, Tennessee, Mr. Balch confided his desire to become an Episcopal priest to his supportive wife; and

WHEREAS, upon completion of his studies at St. Luke's Seminary in Sewanee, Tennessee, and external studies from the University of London in 1954, Mr. Balch served as Vicar of St. Anne's Church in Memphis and chaplain at the Millington Naval Air Station for the next three years; in 1957, he was called to serve as Rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Chattanooga, serving there until his retirement in 1978; and

WHEREAS, while at Grace Episcopal, Mr. Balch earned his bachelor of divinity and master of sacred theology degrees from the University of the South in Sewanee; under his leadership, Grace Episcopal became a leader in the Tennessee diocese in the support of worldwide liturgical renewal as set forth in the Proposed Prayer Book of 1976; and

WHEREAS, Lee Balch oversaw the growth of facilities, membership, and outreach to the Chattanooga community of Grace Church; he was one of the founders of St. Nicholas School and was a sponsor of the Lower Room, a popular drug-and-alcohol-free coffee house for youth; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Balch considered his work as a counselor in the field of addiction recovery the most meaningful of his pastorate; in 1968, he and the late Felix G. Miller, Jr., along with Richard Stilwell and other community leaders, founded the Hillandale Center of Signal Mountain as one of the area's first alcohol and substance abuse treatment facilities; and

WHEREAS, Lee Balch served on the Board of Directors at the Council of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services (CADAS), which led to the formation of the Tennessee Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, recognized today as the voice of alcohol and drug abuse

services in Tennessee; though not an alcoholic or substance abuser, he frequently attended AA meetings, often with Ruth, and relished being referred to as an honorary member of Alcoholics Anonymous; and

WHEREAS, bucking formidable opposition from his bishop, many members of his congregation, community leaders and even some physicians, Mr. Balch succeeded in opening the doors of Grace Episcopal Church as a location for AA meetings; despite the fact that such an action was radical for the time, both the congregation and the recovery community grew; and

WHEREAS, along with his commitment to his ministry, Lee Balch continued his interest in engineering, serving as an electronics instructor at Chattanooga State Technical Community College from 1966-1986; he was appointed to the Chattanooga Board of Electrical Examiners in 1981 and held membership in the National Society of Professional Engineers and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Balch was active in the Chattanooga Engineers Club and the Chattanooga Amateur Radio Club; he served as President of the Chattanooga Torch Club from 1970-71 and the Chattanooga Chapter of the United Nations Association in 1973; and

WHEREAS, Lee Balch was deeply devoted to his family, and was, indeed, fortunate to enjoy the loving companionship of his supportive wife, Ruth, who embraced his call to ministry wholeheartedly; he was the proud and loving parent of a son, Thomas C. Balch, who preceded him in death; daughters Laura Scherzer and Martha Granda; daughter-in-law Sharon Balch; son-in-law Tom Granda; grandchildren Michael Scherzer and his wife, Daphne, Joelly Scherzer, Jessica Granda, and Evan Balch; and great-grandchildren, Jordan and Mac Scherzer; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Balch leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity as a professional engineer; great love, compassion, joy, hope and creativity as a Christian clergyman; abiding affection and loyalty in his private life; and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional servant of God and loving and compassionate human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Leon "Lee" Crawford Balch, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to serving his God and humanity with persistence, love, courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Lee Balch.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.